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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

S/CT FOR VIC NELSON, JANE MOSBACHER, MIKE MILLER

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [IT](#) [VT](#)
SUBJECT: RSI PROPOSAL: CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT
TRAINING FOR THE VATICAN

REF: STATE 128554

¶1. (SBU) This message has been prepared in coordination with the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See.

Need for Project

¶2. (SBU) The purpose of the project is to foster a bilateral dialogue with the Vatican on counter-terrorism preparedness and to improve the Vatican's ability to respond to a terrorist attack. Vatican City State is the seat of universal government of the Catholic Church (the Holy See), a moral and spiritual point of reference for many of the 1.3 billion Catholics around the world. The dome of Saint Peter's Basilica, the Basilica itself, and Saint Peter's square are all part of Vatican City and a global symbol of Christianity. Al-Qaeda has publicly identified Pope Benedict XVI and the Catholic Church as an enemy, labeling Church leaders as "crusaders," and reportedly has the ambition of assassinating the Pope. These threats are of compelling concern because the Vatican hosts up to 25,000 visitors each day and 4.44 million visitors each year. A significant number of U.S. citizens are among these visitors (approximately 6 million U.S. citizens visit Italy annually). It is also a site of religious and historic significance, including a priceless art collection.

¶3. (SBU) The security force for Vatican City is the Corpo della Gendarmeria, a 160-member force responsible for overall security and public order, criminal investigations, and crowd and traffic control. The Gendarmeria's capacity to respond successfully to a major incident or simultaneous multiple incidents in Vatican City is untested. Last year, the Gendarmeria requested and received explosives training at the FBI Academy. This engagement was positive, but its specific focus did not enable us to determine the Gendarmeria's preparedness to respond in the event of a terrorist attack. In the event of such an attack, the Gendarmeria would need to engage with Italian -- and possibly international (to include U.S.) -- security services to meet operational needs.

¶4. (SBU) The Vatican decision-making process is traditionally opaque. The Vatican, a sovereign and independent state under international law, is unwilling to be seen as subordinate to any other state, including Italy, with which it has a complicated history. Following recent engagement with the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See (and through the embassy with specialized agencies at Embassy Rome), however, the Gendarmeria's leadership has acknowledged an increase in the threat environments. Its director welcomed a U.S. proposal to collaborate on a critical incident management training program, with a view to broadening dialogue on overall emergency preparedness and counterterrorism.

15. (SBU) It is the judgment of the Charge d'Affaires to the Holy See, the Regional Security Office at Embassy Rome, the FBI Legal Attache's office at Embassy Rome, and the RSI coordinator based at Embassy Rome that such modest engagement with the Vatican will provide immediate and long-term benefits. The training will contribute directly to an improvement in the Gendarmeria's capacity to prepare for and respond to a terrorist attack. Over the longer-term, the planning and coordination issues raised by the program will, we hope, spur necessary Vatican engagement and action with outside partners. By increasing U.S. awareness of the status of Vatican planning, we will also improve our ability to effectively assist any U.S. citizens in the event of an attack, and to provide support (as requested) to the Holy See or to any Italian authorities involved in a response to a crisis in Vatican City State.

Description of Program Proposed

16. (SBU) We propose working with the U.S. Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) to design a three-day Critical Incident Management training program for 15-20 team leaders of the 160-member Gendarmeria. The program will be custom-designed to meet the specific needs of the Gendarmeria based on a current threat assessment. It will involve interactive classroom instruction, a table top exercise and the use of physical Vatican facilities to reinforce key concepts. All instruction will be delivered in a train-the-trainer format and training materials will be provided, in Italian, to help promote subsequent training

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replication and adoption. Key topics to be covered include: principles and features of a critical incident management system; resource mapping and accountability; preventing attacks; incident and proactive planning; major incident management; and critical incident review.

Implementation Issues

17. (SBU) Once approved, the timing of program implementation will need to be arranged between the Vatican and ICITAP. The program will be held at the Vatican. DOJ's ICITAP will be the implementing body.

Audience of Program

18. (SBU) The target audience is the Vatican's security services, the Gendarmeria. Significantly, this program has the support of Cardinal Lajollo, who oversees governance of Vatican City State. The Cardinal's engagement will be critical in subsequent collaboration with U.S. security services in the event of an attack.

Funding Breakdown

19. (SBU) ICITAP prepared a notional budget of \$110,841.52 for three trainers for a total of 12 days, including a five-day training program. This notional program likely exceeds the absorptive capacity of the Vatican, at least for an initial program. We therefore propose to scale it back to a three-day training program with two days of prior consultation in Rome. (This visit will follow prior preparatory coordination through Embassies Vatican and Rome.) The notional budget will need to be adjusted downward correspondingly. (Note: Notional budget e-mailed to S/CT.)

Tie to Law Enforcement

110. (SBU) The Corpo della Gendarmeria is the primary

security service for Vatican City State. (NB: The Vatican's Swiss Guards have responsibility for the physical security of the Pope himself.)

Relation to RSI, Desired Effects

¶11. (SBU) The Holy See has global reach, and any attack on the Vatican would lead to global reactions. One of the objective of the program is to clarify security links between the Vatican and Italy and other key states. This is the first time the Vatican's political governors and security leadership have welcomed collaboration with the United States on a policy level. This program could open the door to subsequent U.S. counterterrorism engagement with the Vatican.

Congressional Notification

¶12. (SBU) Given the facts that the Vatican and the Pope are viable Al-Qaeda targets and that millions of U.S. citizens visit the Vatican each year, we seek funding for a three-day Critical Incident Management training program for 15-20 team leaders of the Vatican's security force, the Corpo della Gendarmeria, to be conducted in Vatican City State, to strengthen the Vatican's ability to respond to a terrorist attack and to deepen bilateral collaboration with the Vatican on counterterrorism issues.

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